STARLIN · GIORDANO · RUBINSTEIN
BATMAN
75¢
421
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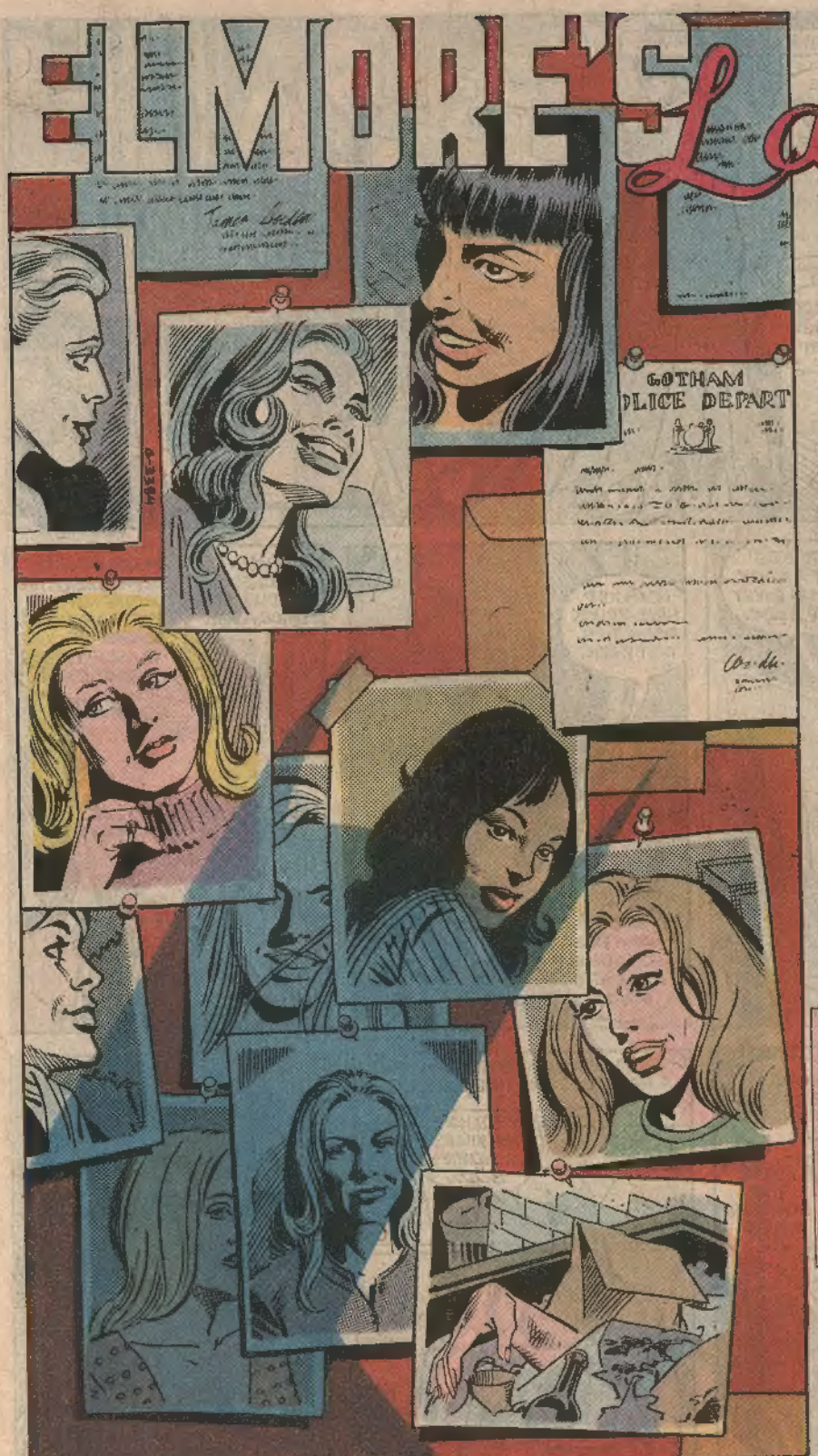
ELMORE'S Lady



TEN *WOMEN*; TEN *MURDERED WOMEN*.

ALL VICTIMS OF THE MAN THE PAPERS HAVE DUBBED, THE *DUMPSTER SLASHER*.

I'VE HAD TO SIT BY, HELPLESSLY WATCHING THE *BODY COUNT* RISE. A COUPLE OF TIMES I'VE COME *CLOSE* TO CATCHING THIS MONSTER, BUT NEVER CLOSE ENOUGH.

WE HAVE *SOME FIBER EVIDENCE* THAT WILL HELP GAIN CONVICTION *IN COURT*, BUT NOTHING TO LEAD US DIRECTLY TO THIS *UNKNOWN MANIAC*.

NONE OF *MY USUAL METHODS* ARE WORKING ON THIS CASE, BECAUSE THE SLASHER IS LIKE *NO CRIMINAL* I'VE EVER PURSUED. THERE'S NO *FINANCIAL GAIN* IN HIS CRIMES--THEY'RE DONE SOLELY FOR *KICKS*.

IT'S ALL SO *FRUSTRATING*, SO *INFURIATING*.

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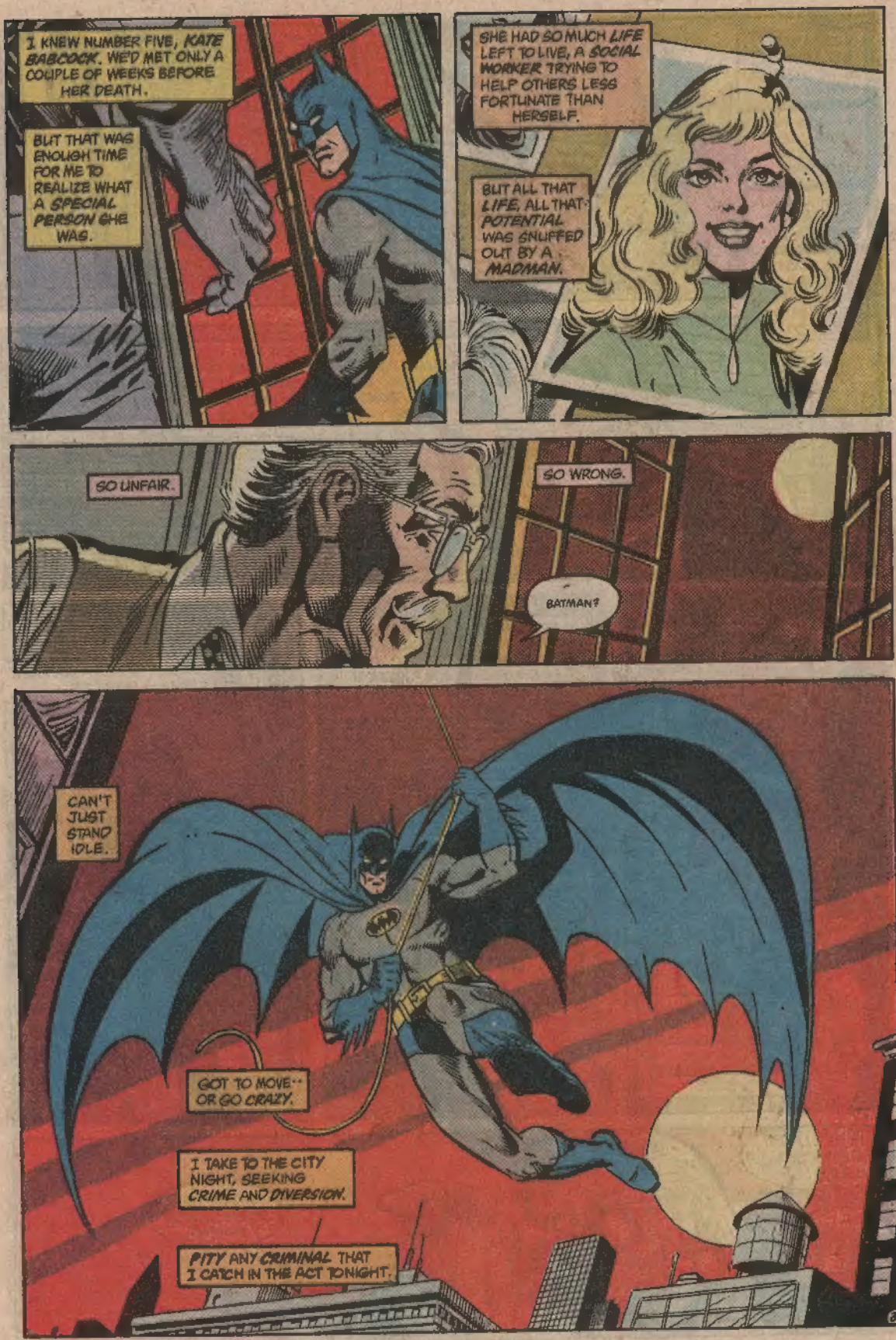
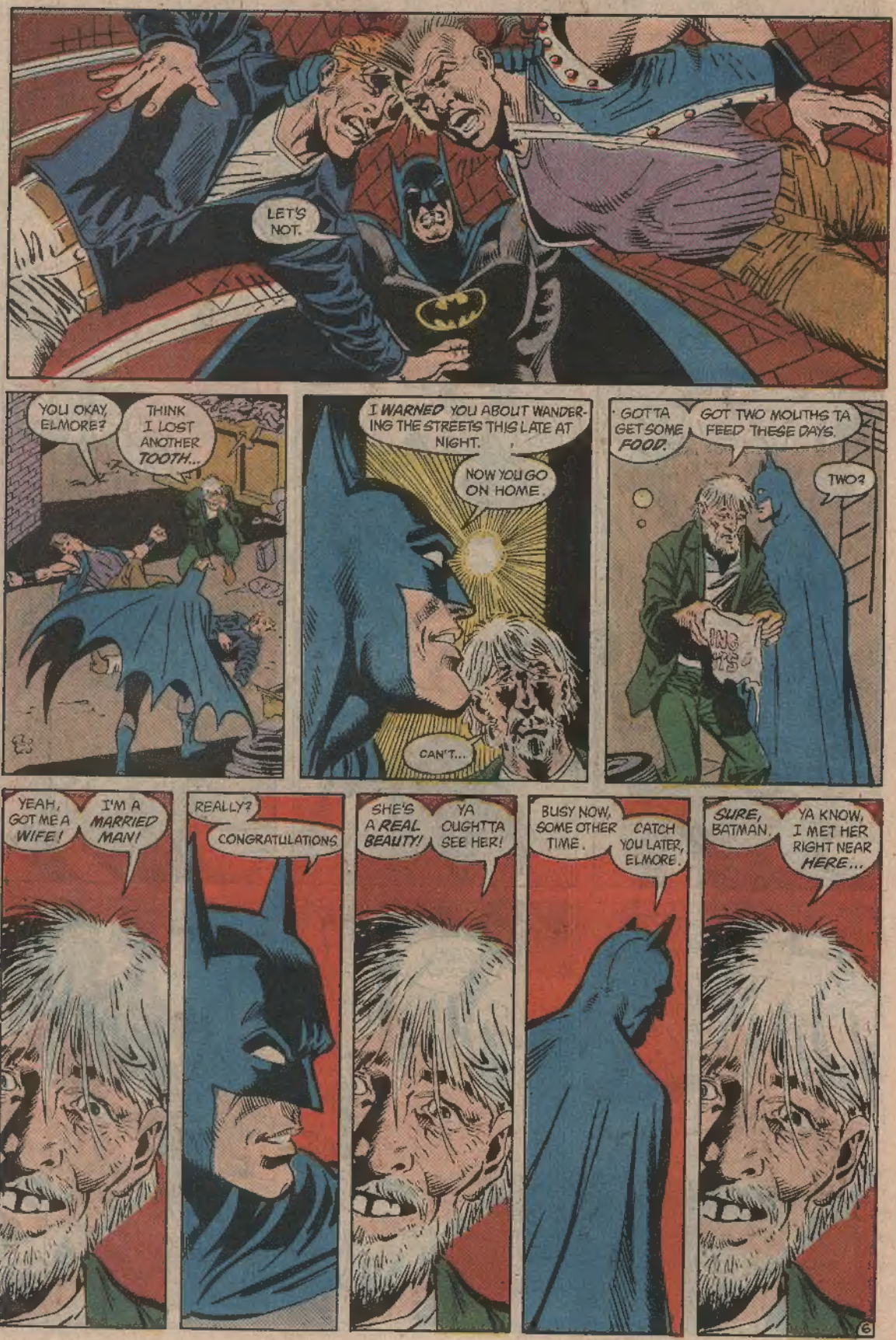
COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE, 3:54 A.M.
THERE SHOULD BE ELEVEN PICTURES.
WHERE IS THE ELEVENTH?
IF I WERE YOU, I'D BE GLAD THAT THERE'S ONLY TEN.
THE DUMPSTER SLASHER HAS SET A PATTERN IN HIS KILLINGS.
HE STRIKES ONCE A WEEK, SKIPPING EVERY THIRD WEEK.
HE SHOULD HAVE STRUCK AGAIN THIS PAST WEEK.
¿WHY HAVEN'T WE COME UPON ANOTHER BODY?
I'VE HAD MY MEN CHECKING ALL DUMPSTERS, TWICE A DAY.
THE SANITATION DEPARTMENT HAS ORDERS NOT TO EMPTY ANYTHING BEFORE CHECKING TO SEE IF THERE'S A BODY INSIDE.
SO FAR THEY'VE COME UP WITH ZIP.
MAYBE THE SLASHER'S MOVED ON.
THESE SERIAL MURDERERS HAVE A HABIT OF DOING THAT, YOU KNOW.
LET'S HOPE THIS KILLER'S A HOME-BODY.
I WANT THIS ONE.
DEAR GOD, I WANT THIS ONE SO BAD, I CAN TASTE IT.


I KNEW NUMBER FIVE, KATE BABCOCK, WE'D MET ONLY A COUPLE OF WEEKS BEFORE HER DEATH.
BUT THAT WAS ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO REALIZE WHAT A SPECIAL PERSON SHE WAS.
SHE HAD SO MUCH LIFE LEFT TO LIVE, A SOCIAL WORKER TRYING TO HELP OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE THAN HERSELF.
BUT ALL THAT LIFE, ALL THAT POTENTIAL WAS SNUFFED OUT BY A MADMAN.
SO UNFAIR.
SO WRONG.
BATMAN?
CAN'T JUST STAND IDLE.
GOT TO MOVE-- OR GO CRAZY.
I TAKE TO THE CITY NIGHT, SEEKING CRIME AND DIVERSION.
PITY ANY CRIMINAL THAT I CATCH IN THE ACT TONIGHT.

WHEN ELMORE WAS A KID, HE GOT INTO SNIFFING GLUE.
IN HIGH SCHOOL IT WAS BEER AND COUGH MEDICINE.
HE EVENTUALLY GRADUATED TO POT AND ACID.
WHEN COCAINE BECAME FASHIONABLE, HE GOT INTO THAT.
ALL THIS RECREATIONAL DRUG USE PRETTY WELL BURNED OUT ELMORE'S FRONTAL LOBE.
THESE DAYS, HE'S GOT THE IQ OF A GERBIL, CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER HIS LAST NAME.
I KNOW HIM -- HE'S HARMLESS. THE ONLY PERSON HE'S EVER HURT WAS HIMSELF.
TONIGHT, ELMORE IS OUT GROCERY SHOPPING.
THIS PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOOD ISN'T A VERY GOOD LOCATION FOR FINDING DISCARDED FOOD.
BUT RESTAURANT ROW IS SOME DISTANCE FROM HERE.
THE LAST TIME ELMORE MADE THE TRIP, IT TOOK HIM A WEEK TO FIND HIS WAY HOME.
TONIGHT HE HAS A DIFFERENT KIND OF PROBLEM.
DOUGHNUTS!
WHAT WE GOT HERE?
WHY AS I LIVES AND BREATHES, IT'S A BUM!
A GENUINE DERELICT!
WHAT'S HE DOING ON OUR TURF?

I DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM...
...HONEST...
LISTEN TO HIM! LISTEN TO HIM WHINE!
IF THERE'S ONE THING I HATE MORE THAN BUMS, IT'S WHINERS.
WHATTA GEEK!
HOW 'BOUT WE REALLY HURT HIM!


LET'S NOT.
YOU OKAY, ELMORE?
THINK I LOST ANOTHER TOOTH...
I WARNED YOU ABOUT WANDERING THE STREETS THIS LATE AT NIGHT.
NOW YOU GO ON HOME.
CAN'T...
GOTTA GET SOME FOOD.
GOT TWO MOUTHS TA FEED THESE DAYS.
TWO?
YEAH, GOT ME A WIFE!
I'M A MARRIED MAN!
REALLY?
CONGRATULATIONS.
SHE'S A REAL BEAUTY!
YA OUGHTTA SEE HER!
BUSY NOW, SOME OTHER TIME.
CATCH YOU LATER, ELMORE.
SURE, BATMAN.
YA KNOW, I MET HER RIGHT NEAR HERE...
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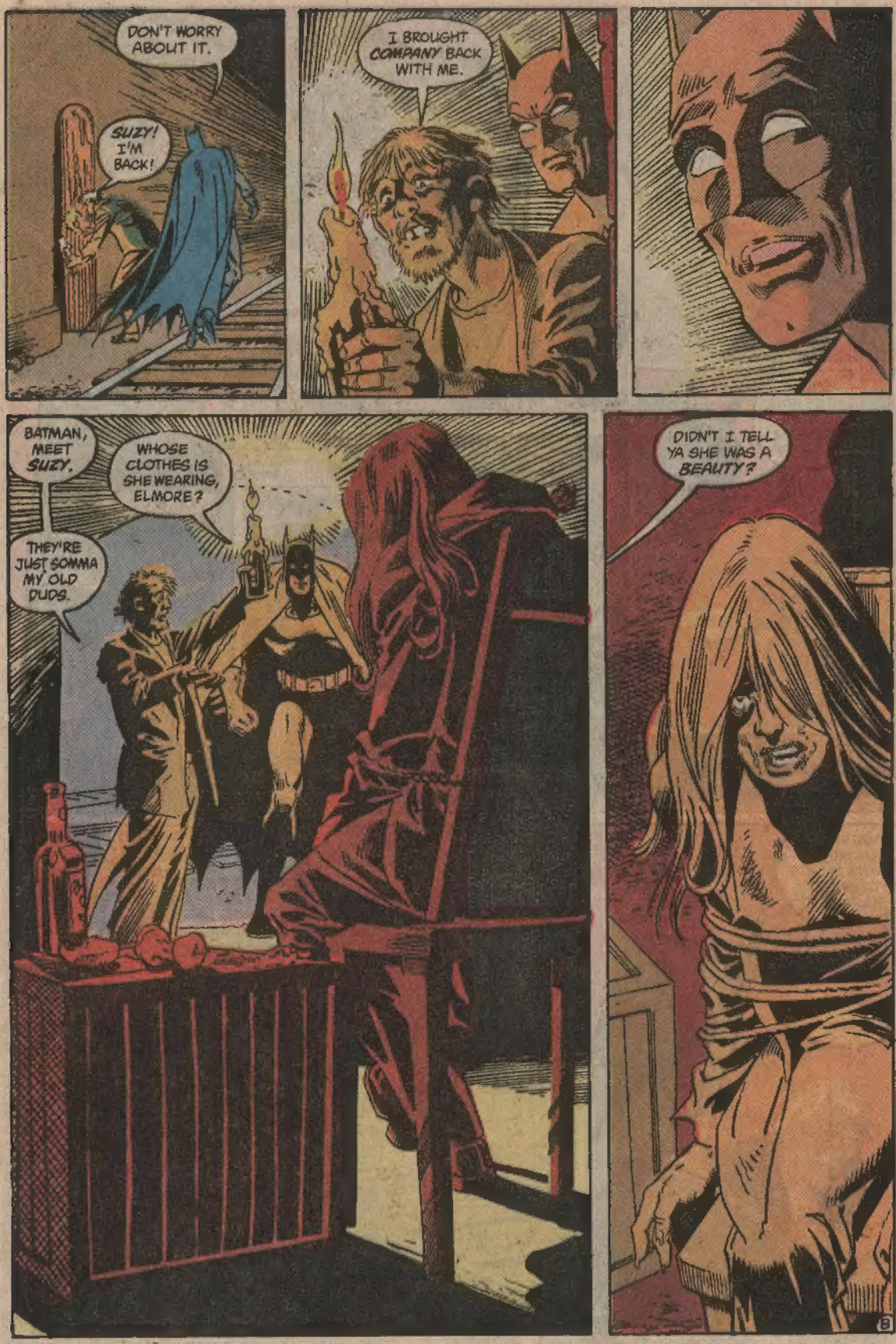
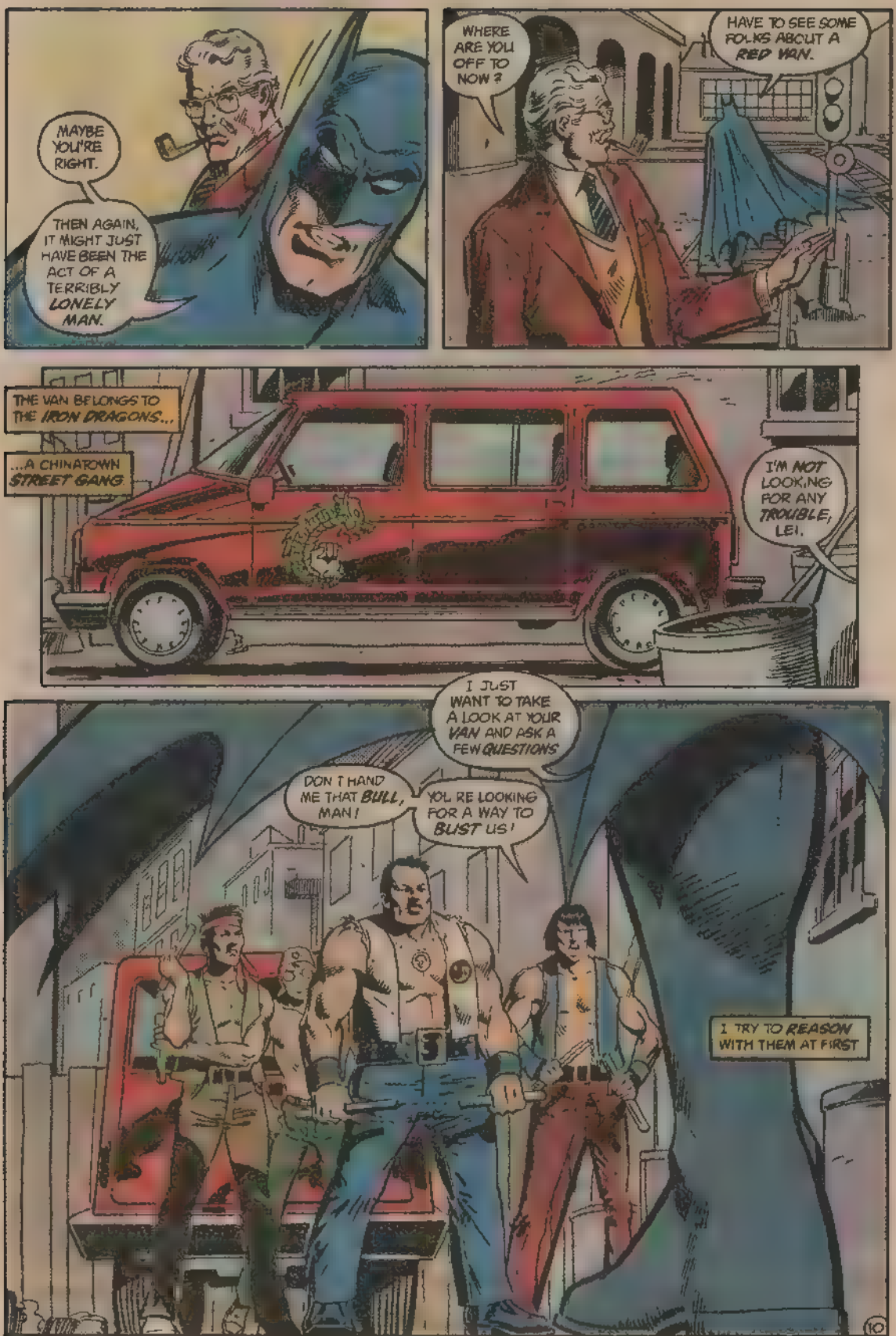
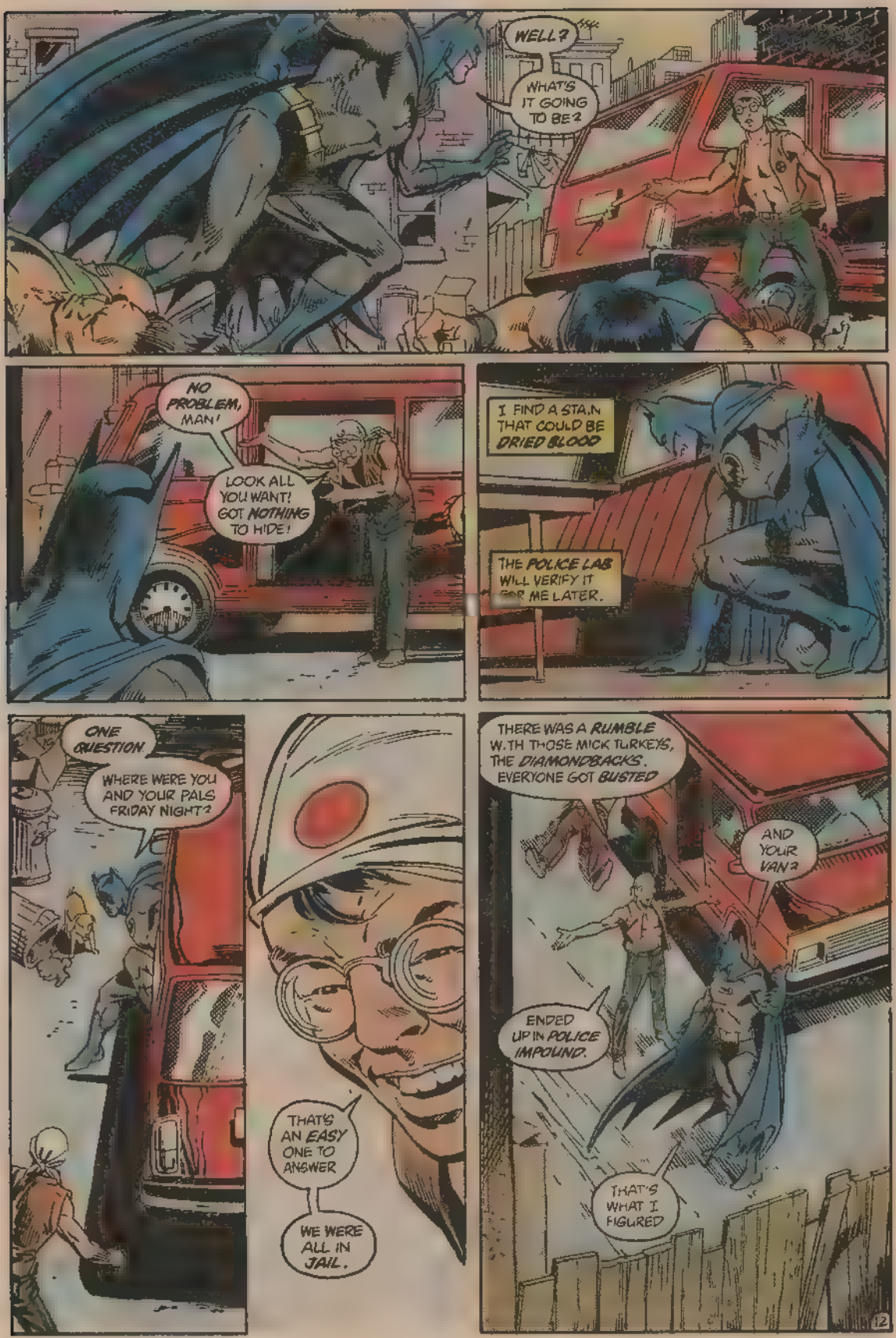
...MET HER AT THE DUMPSTER, ON THE NEXT STREET OVER.
WOULD YOU SHOW ME THAT DUMPSTER, ELMORE?
SURE...
I FIND SOMETHING BROWN AND DRIED ON THE RIM OF THE DUMPSTER.
IT SMELLS A BIT COPPERY.
DRIED BLOOD?
YOU KNOW, ELMORE, I THINK I'D LIKE TO MEET YOUR WIFE.
REALLY!?
ELMORE'S HOME IS LOCATED OFF AN ABANDONED SPUR OF THE GOTHAM METRO RAILROAD.
WE DON'T GET MUCH COMPANY. NONE, REALLY.
HOPE SUZY CLEANED UP THE PLACE, LIKE SHE PROMISED.


DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SUZY! I'M BACK!
I BROUGHT COMPANY BACK WITH ME.
BATMAN, MEET SUZY.
WHOSE CLOTHES IS SHE WEARING, ELMORE?
THEY'RE JUST SOMMA MY OLD DUDS.
DIDN'T I TELL YA SHE WAS A BEAUTY?

YOU MET HER AT THAT DUMPSTER?
YEAH, SOME GUYS TOSSED HER IN IT.
GUESS IT WAS SOME KINDA PRANK.
GUYS?
YOU SAW THESE MEN?
NOT REAL GOOD, BUT I SEEN THEIR VAN JUST FINE!
WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE?
IT WAS RED AND HAD A DRAGON AND A HAND ON THE SIDE!
A DRAGON AND A FIST...
I KNOW THIS VEHICLE.
ELMORE, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CALL SOME PEOPLE...
THE SUN WAS UP BY THE TIME GORDON AND HIS CREW ARRIVED.
SUZY!
YA CAN'T TAKE MA SUZY!
NO!
YOU DID THE ONLY THING YOU COULD DO, BATMAN.
KEEPING THAT BODY WAS INSANE.
9


MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT.
THEN AGAIN, IT MIGHT JUST HAVE BEEN THE ACT OF A TERRIBLY LONELY MAN.
WHERE ARE YOU OFF TO NOW?
HAVE TO SEE SOME FOLKS ABOUT A RED VAN.
THE VAN BELONGS TO THE IRON DRAGONS...
...A CHINATOWN STREET GANG.
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANY TROUBLE, LEI.
I JUST WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR VAN AND ASK A FEW QUESTIONS
DON'T HAND ME THAT BULL, MAN!
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A WAY TO BUST US!
I TRY TO REASON WITH THEM AT FIRST
10

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.


WELL?
WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?
NO PROBLEM, MAN!
LOOK ALL YOU WANT! GOT NOTHING TO HIDE!
I FIND A STAIN THAT COULD BE DRIED BLOOD
THE POLICE LAB WILL VERIFY IT FOR ME LATER.
ONE QUESTION.
WHERE WERE YOU AND YOUR PALS FRIDAY NIGHT?
THAT'S AN EASY ONE TO ANSWER
WE WERE ALL IN JAIL.
THERE WAS A RUMBLE W.TH THOSE MICK TURKEYS, THE DIAMONDBACKS. EVERYONE GOT BUSTED
AND YOUR VAN?
ENDED UP IN POLICE IMPOUND.
THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED

SOME POLICE TECHNICIANS WILL BE COMING BY TO LOOK AT THE VAN DON'T HASSLE THEM.
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT WE'RE NOT AFTER THE IRON DRAGONS.
SOMEONE USED YOUR VAN FRIDAY NIGHT WE WANT TO KNOW WHO.
SURE, BUT BEFORE YOU GO...
IT'S NOT GOING TO LOOK SO GOOD IF THOSE GUYS WAKE UP AND I'M STILL PRETTY.
COULD YOU
MY PLEASURE.
THANKS.
THE LAST SUSPECT I HAD IN THESE SLASHER MURDERS WAS CLEARED WHEN I TURNED OUT HE WAS IN JAIL, HIS VAN IN POLICE IMPOUND, JUST LIKE THE IRON DRAGONS
THE COMPUTER TELLS ME THAT ONE POLICE OFFICER WAS ON DUTY AT THE CAR POUND ON THE NIGHTS OF EACH OF THE KILLINGS
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THERE'S NOTHING I HATE MORE THAN A COP GONE BAD.
VICTOR GIAMBATTISTA
DET. SGT.
I'M LOOKING FOR VICTOR GIAMBATTISTA
POLICE IMPOUND.
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK, BATMAN
VIC JUST WENT OFF DUTY.
GOTHAM POLICE
HE'S GOT THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT TONIGHT SHOULD I LET HIM KNOW YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIM?
DON'T BOTHER.
IT'S ME... VICTOR.
I GOT TROUBLE
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I GOT TO KNOW WHAT YOU GUYS WERE UP TO, WITH THOSE TRUCKS I LET YOU BORROW.
I KNOW WHAT I AGREED TO, A HUNDRED BUCKS A VAN, NO QUESTIONS.
BUT THAT'S ALL CHANGED. BATMAN'S BEEN AROUND, LOOKING FOR ME.
I NEED SOME ANSWERS FOR THE QUESTIONS HE'S GOING TO ASK.
YEAH...
YEAH...
OKAY, I'LL MEET YOU THERE.
SEE YOU THEN
I'M ON MY WAY TO GIAMBATTISTA'S APARTMENT, BUT I GET SIDETRACKED.
NEED LEGAL AID?
A SIMPLE PURSE SNATCHING.
FIGURE IT'LL ONLY TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO RETRIEVE THE PURSE
THEN THE IDIOT PULLS A GUN ON ME.
I'M JUST NOT IN THE MOOD FOR SUCH NONSENSE
I STAY TO COMFORT THE WOMAN UNTIL THE POLICE AND AMBULANCE ARRIVE.
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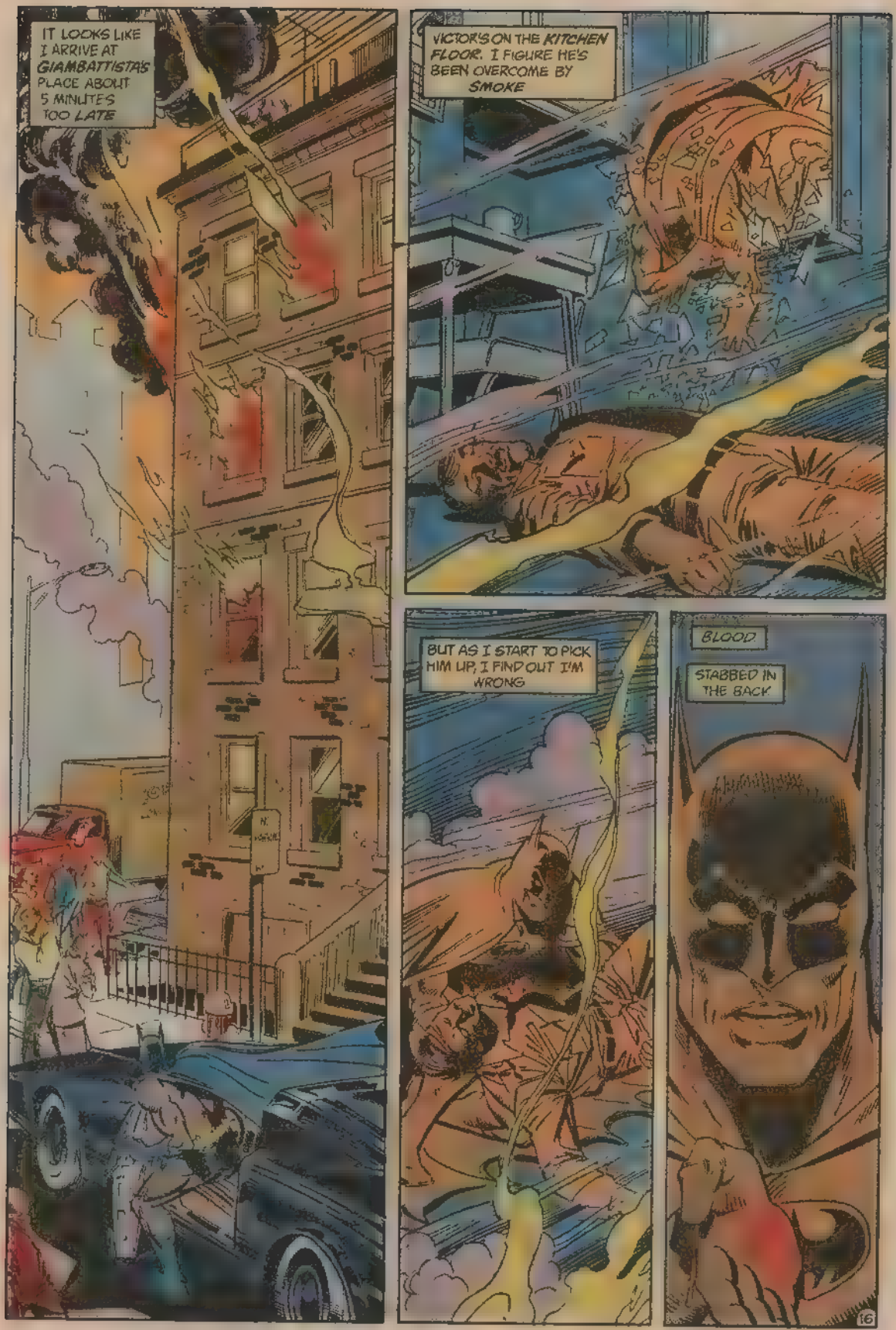
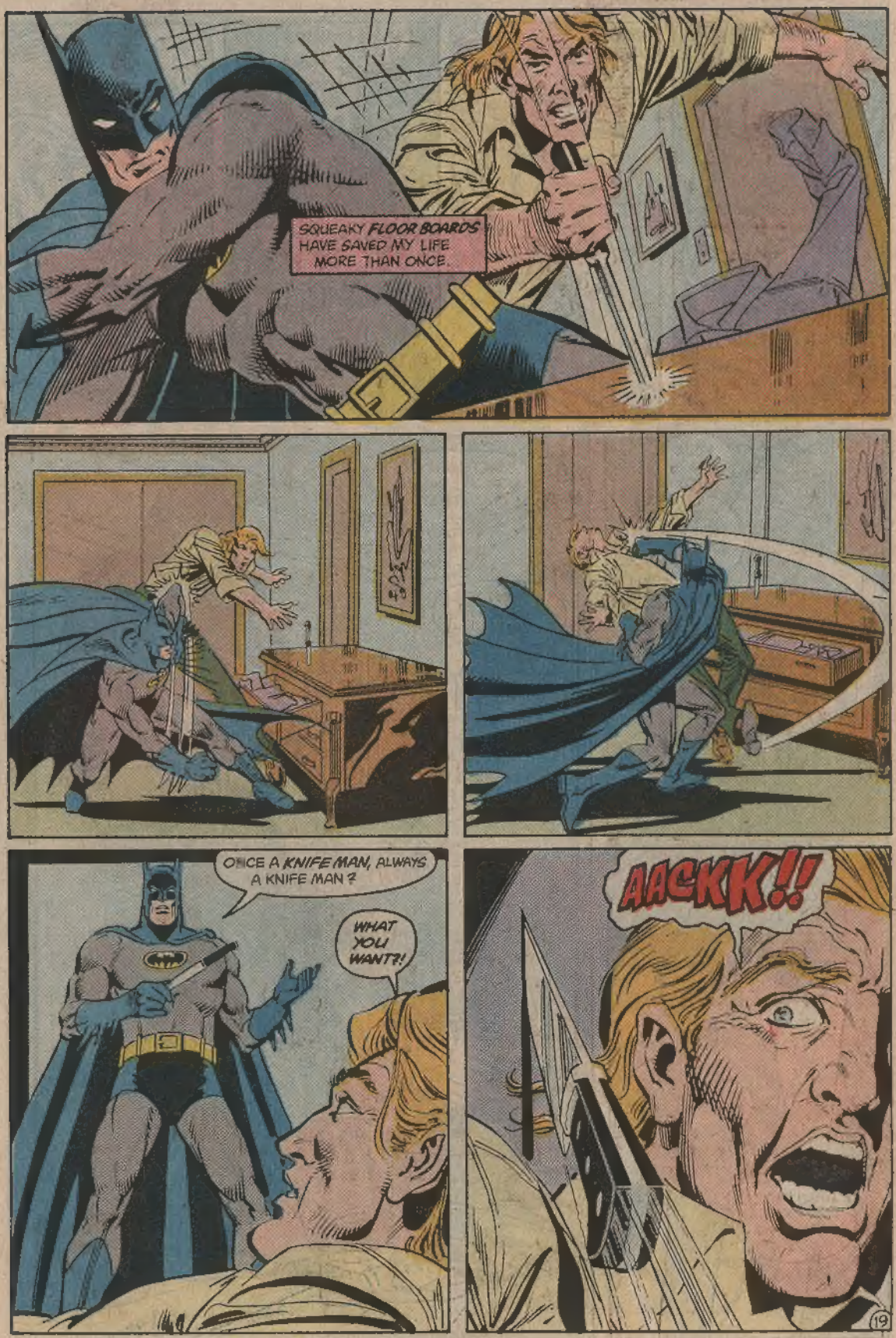
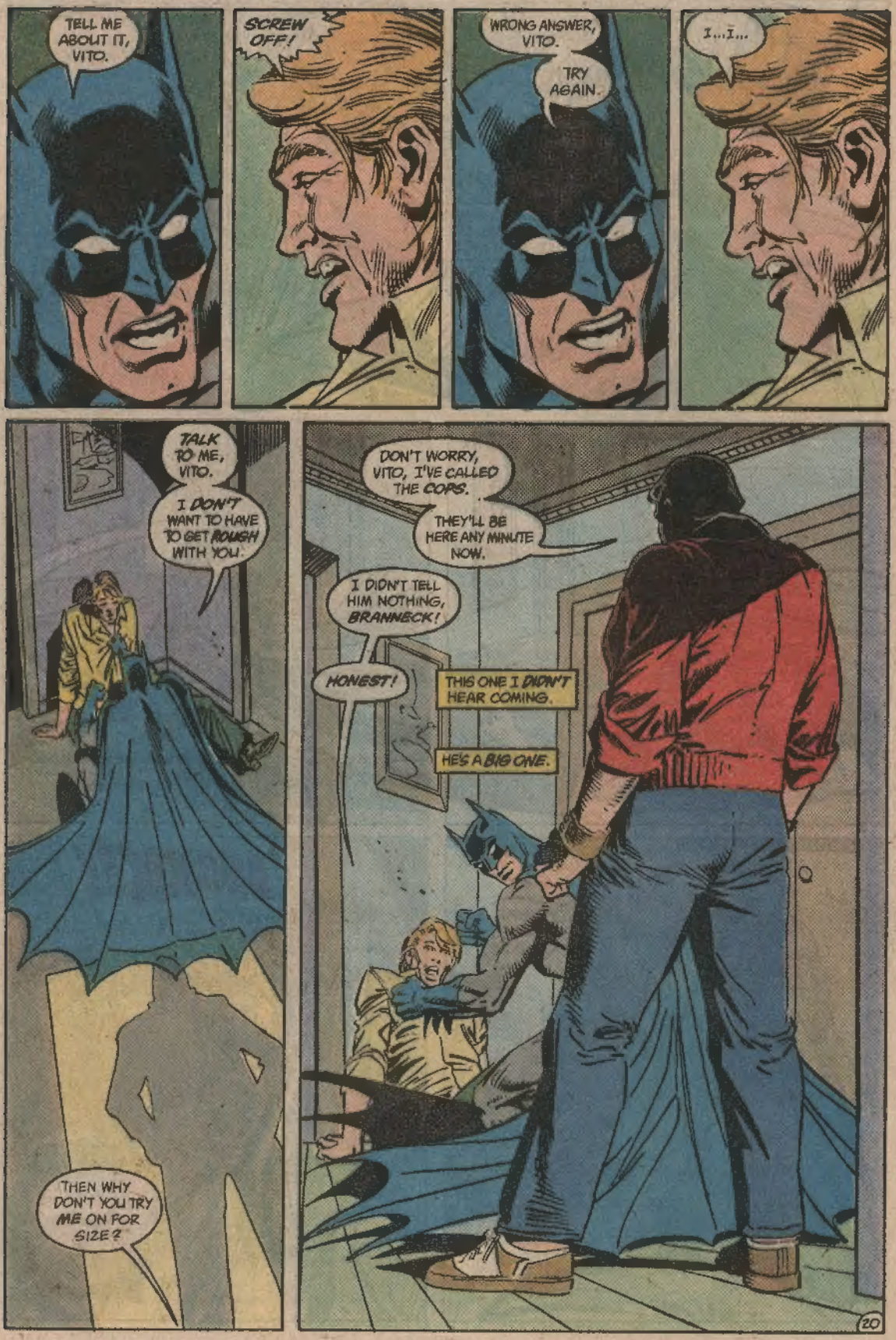

IT LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVE AT GIAMBATTISTA'S PLACE ABOUT 5 MINUTES TOO LATE
VICTOR'S ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. I FIGURE HE'S BEEN OVERCOME BY SMOKE
BUT AS I START TO PICK HIM UP, I FIND OUT I'M WRONG
BLOOD
STABBED IN THE BACK

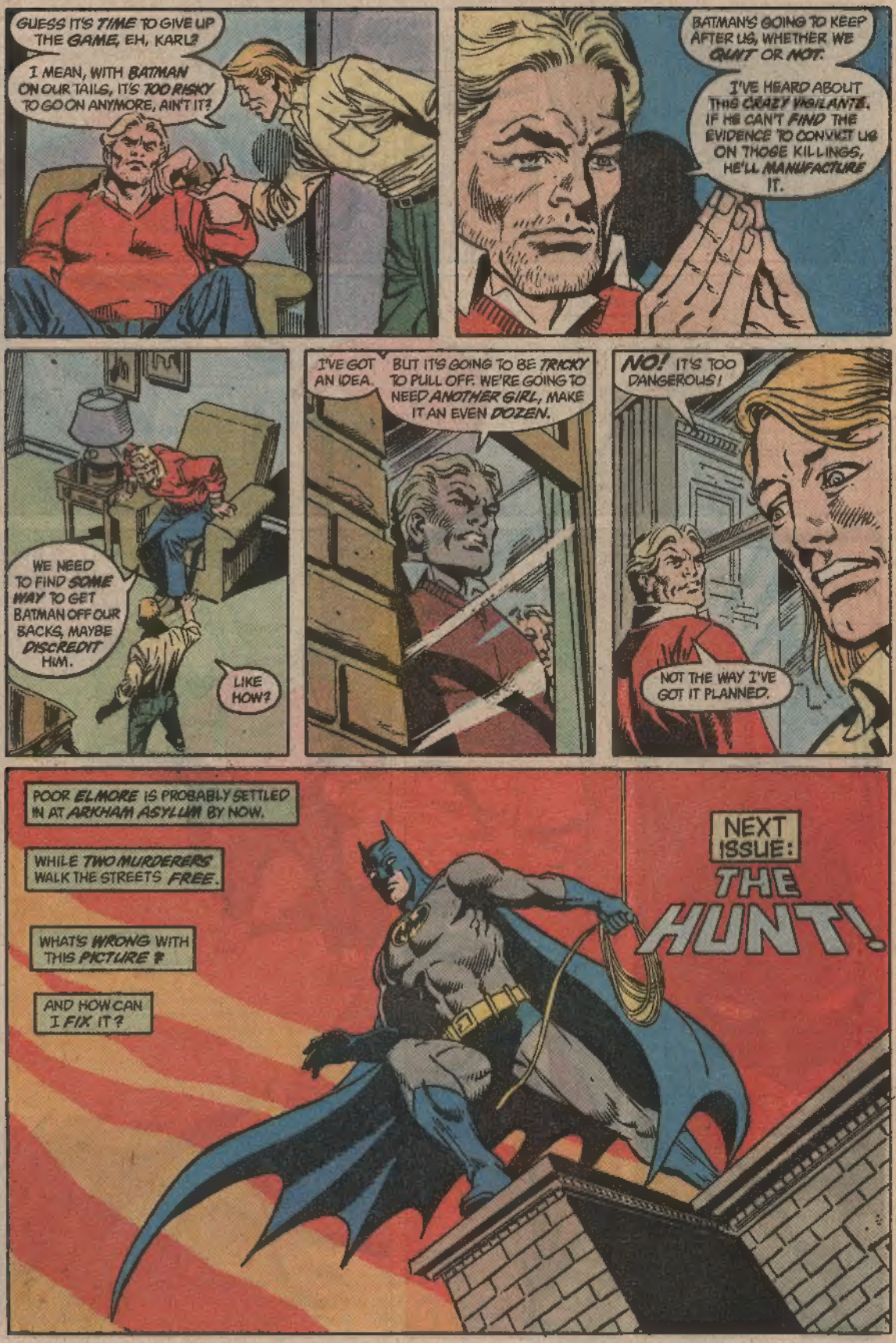
GIAMBATTISTA OBVIOUSLY LASTED LONG ENOUGH TO LEAVE ME THE IDENTITY OF HIS KILLER.
PROBABLY HALF DELIRIOUS, REVERTING BACK TO HIS NATIVE ITALIAN, HE POINTED AN ACCUSING FINGER, USING HIS OWN BLOOD!
YOU WASTED YOUR TIME ON THIS ONE, BATMAN.
I KNOW.
HE'S DEADER THAN YESTERDAY'S NEWS.
BUT IT'S NOT A WASTE OF TIME. THAT STIFF'S EVIDENCE IN A MAJOR MURDER INVESTIGATION.
HAVE T GIFT-WRAPPED AND DELIVERED TO COMMISSIONER GORDON.

CUGINO THE A'TOR A MALE COUSIN
IT DOESN T TAKE THE COMPUTER TO LOCATE VICTOR GIAMBATTISTA'S
THE APARTMENT OF VITO PROCACCINI
VICTOR'S COUSIN DOESN'T SEEM TO BE HOME WHEN I STOP BY
I FIGURE HE WON'T MIND ME R F..NG THROUGH H S TH NGS
KNOW IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT I MIGHT COME ACROSS SOMETHING INCRIMINATING.
LIKE A BLOODY KNIFE
BUT I END UP BEING WRONG ON ALL COUNTS


SQUEAKY FLOOR BOARDS HAVE SAVED MY LIFE MORE THAN ONCE.
ONCE A KNIFE MAN, ALWAYS A KNIFE MAN?
WHAT YOU WANT?!
AACKK!!


TELL ME ABOUT IT, VITO.
SCREW OFF!
WRONG ANSWER, VITO.
TRY AGAIN.
I...I...
TALK TO ME, VITO.
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO GET ROUGH WITH YOU.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU TRY ME ON FOR SIZE?
DON'T WORRY, VITO, I'VE CALLED THE COPS.
THEY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE NOW.
I DIDN'T TELL HIM NOTHING, BRANNECK!
HONEST!
THIS ONE I DIDN'T HEAR COMING.
HE'S A BIG ONE.

YOU PLANNED ON STICKING AROUND, BATMAN?
I'D BE REAL INTERESTED TO SEE YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOU WERE BURGLARIZING MY PAL'S PLACE..
HE HAS ME.
CONTINUING THIS CONFRONTATION WILL SOLVE NOTHING AND PROVE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO GORDON.
I HAVE TO BACK OFF, BUT BEFORE I DO...
YOU'RE THE OTHER MAN IN THE VAN, AREN'T YOU?
PROVE IT.
I WILL.


GUESS IT'S TIME TO GIVE UP THE GAME, EH, KARL?
I MEAN, WITH BATMAN ON OUR TAILS, IT'S TOO RISKY TO GO ON ANYMORE, AIN'T IT?
BATMAN'S GOING TO KEEP AFTER US, WHETHER WE QUIT OR NOT.
I'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS CRAZY VIGILANTE. IF HE CAN'T FIND THE EVIDENCE TO CONVICT US ON THOSE KILLINGS, HE'LL MANUFACTURE IT.
WE NEED TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET BATMAN OFF OUR BACKS, MAYBE DISCREDIT HIM.
LIKE HOW?
I'VE GOT AN IDEA.
BUT IT'S GOING TO BE TRICKY TO PULL OFF. WE'RE GOING TO NEED ANOTHER GIRL, MAKE IT AN EVEN DOZEN.
NO! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
NOT THE WAY I'VE GOT IT PLANNED.
POOR ELMORE IS PROBABLY SETTLED IN AT ARKHAM ASYLUM BY NOW.
WHILE TWO MURDERERS WALK THE STREETS FREE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?
AND HOW CAN I FIX IT?
NEXT ISSUE:
THE HUNT!